

NEWS RELEASE



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SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
San Diego, California***

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For Immediate Release

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY - January 27, 2006

United States Attorney Carol C. Lam announced that Sandra Bates was sentenced today in federal district court in San Diego by United States District Court Judge Napoleon A. Jones, Jr. to serve 120 months in federal custody, based on her guilty plea to conspiracy to distribute iodine, knowing it would be used to manufacture methamphetamine. On January 12, 2006, Judge Jones sentenced Sandra Bates's husband, Wesley Bates, to serve 120 months in prison for the same offense.

According to court documents, the Bateses owned and operated Bates Feed Store in Pala, California. As part of their plea agreements, the Bateses admitted that they used the feed store to acquire iodine and distribute it to third parties, knowing it would be used to manufacture methamphetamine. The Bateses admitted the conspiracy involved at least 295 pounds of iodine and that they operated an iodine crystallization laboratory at the feed store.

According to Assistant U.S. Attorney Peter Ko, who prosecuted the case, the Bateses were arrested on July 24, 2002, and pleaded guilty on February 18, 2004. According to court documents, while released

on bond pending sentencing, the Bateses fled to Mexico. In July 2005, they were located and expelled to the United States, where they were arrested by U.S. Marshals. They have been in custody since that time.

As part of the Bateses sentences, Judge Jones also ordered them to forfeit their feed store and the property on which it and their residence were located.

United States Attorney Lam said, "People should know that if they make or sell methamphetamine, they will be looking at significant prison time and potential forfeiture of their property."

This investigation was conducted by agents and task force officers of the Drug Enforcement Administration and agents from the California Department of Justice, Bureau of Narcotics Enforcement.

DEFENDANTS

Wesley Bates

Sandra Bates

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

Conspiracy to Distribute a Listed Chemical in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Sections 841(c)(2) and 846

PARTICIPATING AGENCIES

Drug Enforcement Administration

California Department of Justice, Bureau of Narcotics Enforcement